OPINION

Bluegrass Beacon

Great strides in the wrong direction

Bluegrass Beacon

By Jim Waters

The more Kentuckians find out about school choice, the more they like it.

The results of a recent survey commissioned by the Bluegrass Institute and conducted by a team of researchers show that. Dr. Larry M. Caillouet, an associate professor of communication at Western Kentucky University, led the researchers.

And 79 percent of the 493 respondents said parents should have more choices about where their children attend school.

Of course in many ways, asking people if they want more choices is like asking them: "Would you like lower gas prices." No real surprise comes with a "yes" answer. After all, we all want more choices.

We have choices in nearly every area of our lives. We can shop around for the "best" price and quality when it comes to groceries, automobiles and insurance. We can choose where to dine, what kind of food we want and what we will pay for it.

We even get a choice about what newspaper to read or if you want to get news, information or opinion from another source – by subscription or free.

And what most of us understand (I'll get back to "most" later) is that with more automobile dealerships or cell-phone providers or pizza parlors vying for our support, comes better quality at a better price. That's because competition ensures that providers must offer quality products and service at the best price if they want to keep customers from choosing a competitor.

In the United States, economic policies creating competition have resulted in prosperity, and in a standard and quality of living that the world envies.

All this leads back to "most" as in: Why do so many people thirk competition involving the most important resource we have – the education of our children – is a bad thing?

Yes, the results of the survey seem logical, as does competition as a proven way to make all schools better.

But for years, the education "establishment" keeps telling the public that school choice is not needed and will not work. Yet, a solid majority of Kentuckians – 55.3 percent – disagree. They not only favor school choice, but they believe it would improve the quality of public schools.

And politicians largely ignore the majority opinion during the current gubernatorial campaign, while claiming that "our education system has made great strides" – stump-speak that rolls too easily off forked tongues. When they utter this false assessment, rarely does it come with any credible examples.

- They ignore the state's high-school graduation rates. They are worse today than 17 years ago when the state passed the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), touted as a standard for the rest of the country. Now 30 percent of our students do not graduate. Great strides?
- They ignore the state's remediation rates. More than half of entering freshmen at Kentucky's colleges and universities take remedial courses. Great strides?
- They ignore the 2006 Kentucky State Performance Report numbers: 49 percent of black students fall below proficiency in reading compared with only 28 percent of whites. The gaps grow

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Bond's Broadcast

Bond's Broadcast

By Hank Bond

It's about time for the whole report to be given.

What plan? The community assessment review.

The plan for now is that on June 1 at 9:30 a.m. the final community assessment meeting will be held at the Carlisle United Methodist Church.

If the meeting follows the format that was outlined at the original meeting it should last in the neighborhood of two hours, but it will be jam packed with information.

The information will be something that can be used by a variety of groups in planning the leadership of the county.

The original survey attracted over 300 responses, which according to the state officials involved in the survey's inception represented a per capita record for community input.

You know it really doesn't matter how many responses there were if we don't pay heed to the content of the surveys.

It is extremely important that as many people as possible turn out for this meeting to listen to what has been put together by the many people involved in this community survey.

This survey is not unlike many used in the business world. In the radio business, for example, when a station's license is up for renewal there used to be a requirement that the station's operational manager or general manager go into the community and do a community ascertainment survey.

This was a true test of the station's performance in the market and what needed to be changed or improved to provide the station's broadcast area with the information or programming most desired by the listening audience and the general public for that matter.

This community assessment survey offers the very same type of information.

It is a combination or maybe a culmination for that matter of information, which has been packaged in the most understandable way and will be presented in its final form.

The meeting will point out the good and bad found during the team's investigation.

This is so very important. We don't need anything that points to only the good without suggestions for improvement.

At the last meeting, there was an air of discontent and dissatisfaction.

This meeting should lead those attending, which will hopefully be a large contingent of people of Carlisle and Nicholas County – plus leaders from every area – to some away from the meeting with a sense of satisfaction and the need to use information provided to the betterment of where we live.

Yes there will be some things pointed out that will not likely be what some would like to hear. There will be some nay sayers who will relish in the content of the report which points to the failures and shortcomings of the place we call home.

I certainly hope this isn't the case for the majority.

I can't help but remember the murmurs and reaction when Mike Mangeot who was leading the last gathering said, "Even if you got a tour bus into downtown to visit the Neal Building and other attractions, where would you park the bus that would be a central location?"

This was but one of the may observations made by those who had come to look the place over and see exactly what there is to offer.

Another shortcoming pointed out is the lack of lodging in Carlisle and Nicholas County. While there is a state resort park in Robertson County, there are no hotel or motel rooms located in the confines of Nicholas County.

This is another area, which has to be addressed.

The group will look over the finished survey, take in the comments from the floor, and hear an early report from the steering committee that evolved from the last meeting.

Everyone is working hard to help make the future bright for Carlisle and Nicholas County.

The original community assessment program came about through action from the members of the Carlisle – Nicholas County Industrial Development Authority.

This of course is what is referred to as the Industrial Board. The same group that came under intense public pressure and ridicule less than a year ago.

Having this assessment done is nothing but a positive step for the board and this community.

Board chairman Mike Pryor said just this week he looks forward to and welcomes comments from the assessment and regardless of who gets the greatest amount of "heat" that the information can be used to move the city and county forward.

Anyone who has any interest in hearing the results of the survey and public comments in a final report is strongly urged to attend this final meeting.

With roots in the past and vision for the future Carlisle and Nicholas County can position themselves to strengthen their position in the world of industry and commerce.

It doesn't happen in giant leaps but in small steps and these have been great beginning steps.

I commend those responsible and urge everyone to take part.

And so, for another week, thanks and thirty.

Veloz Viewpoints

Veloz Viewpoints

By Amy Bond Veloz

Greetings from Nevada! I hope you are all having a great week.

It has been the longest week ever! I tell you, since I have had the babies time has gone by at rapid warp speed. Of course it would, since the babies are growing and we spend 100 percent of our time taking care of them and making sure all their needs are met. Well, this week, I would say we spent 110 percent of our time on them.

On Monday night I came home from work and the babies were doing great. Then, around 7 p.m. they started getting fussy. Then, they started screaming. Neither one of them would let us put them down. We spent the night sleeping with them on our chests. Neither of them would eat very much. Instead they would fuss while they ate. It was awful.

So, Tuesday morning we got up and took the babies in to Vegas to the pediatrician. We didn't have an appointment and didn't know they didn't take walk-ins. But, thankfully, they fit us in anyway. The doctor told us they were too little to be able to truly determine what was wrong with them, but that it could be anything from a very bad cold to RSV.

Hearing the words (acronym) RSV caused my heart to sink a little bit. That was the one reason I wanted to stay pregnant longer, because RSV is such a big issue with preemies. In fact, some babies die from RSV. This scared me. The doctor gave us two prescriptions and sent us home with a follow-up appointment this Wednesday.

We got them home and got their medicine and continued to take care of them. Of course, I wasn't really able to sleep very well for a few nights for fear that something would happen to them in their sleep. Thankfully, they let us put them in their beds to sleep, so that eased my mind a little bit.

Wednesday, they had a good day for me. Ben had to go back to school so I was home alone with them all day. They were really good for most of the day, until about 3 in the afternoon. Analise had a tummy ache and was crying, but Antonio hadn't eaten yet and so he was hungry. And boy was he letting me know it!

Thankfully, Ben's mom was able to come over after school and help me out. She held Analise while I fed Antonio and then put Analise down, once she was asleep. She then held Antonio for me so I could get some work done.

Thursday I went in to work, even though I really didn't want to. I must have called Ben 10 times during the day to check on them. I'm surprised he didn't tell me to stop calling already and that he had it covered.

Friday I was home with them and they had a good day. They didn't sleep a lot throughout the day and we went over to our friends' house for dinner. We got home around 9, fed the babies and put them to bed. They didn't wake up until 4 in the morning. It was amazing! I fed them and Ben changed them and put

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Talkin' From The Mountains

Memories of lunch with Kitty Carlisle Hart

Talkin' From The Mountains

By Dale Greer

Someone else who was dear to my heart died recently: Kitty Carlisle Hart passed away at the age of 96.

I didn't know her well enough to call her a friend, but I spent a lovely afternoon with her many years ago. She was so kind and gracious I cherish the memory.

Kitty Carlisle was born wealthy but she drifted into the movies in the 1930s. She was invited to Hollywood by the big studios after performing in "The Desert Song" and "The Merry Widow" in New York. She is famous for the movie "Duck Soup" with the Marx Brothers, but is best known to the American public for her 17-year stint on the television game show, To Tell The Truth.

She was criticized by some of the elite for participating in show business, an occupation they believed to be beneath her status as a socialite in New York and Paris.

I had reached the top level of my social status in Paris during the same time period—the top rail of a tobacco barn in Paris, Kentucky, so how did this Kentucky boy cross paths with the high society lady? It came about in the 1970s when I was doing interviews at NBC in New York for the NBC affiliate in Louisville.

A network executive informed me that Kitty Carlisle wanted me to interview her and she wanted me to come for lunch at her home. The NBC big wheel wrote down an address. It was in a Manhattan neighborhood that only the rich and famous dared venture into, but I grabbed a cab.

When I arrived at Miss Carlisle's fabulous penthouse apartment, a butler showed me in and directed me to a living room that should have been on the cover of a magazine, and probably had been.

I sat down on a couch that was so nice I would have left the protective plastic cover on it. After a short wait I spent checking out the library (not a single paperback on any of the bookshelves), a double door sprang open and Ms. Carlisle swept in with a twirl of her beautiful gown.

She greeted me as if I was royalty. I self consciously rubbed the toes of my shoes on the back of my pants to try to put some kind of shine on them and tried to keep my composure.

I suspected Mrs. Hart had gotten the wrong impression and thought I was somebody important, but others who knew her told me later that she treated everyone with courtesy and respect. They said she was a genuinely nice lady.

I guess I behaved okay. She seemed to like me. She did chastise me for calling her Miss Carlisle, informing me that she would prefer to be called Mrs. Hart. Her husband, the legendary Moss Hart, died in 1961 and she never remarried. Hart was one of the most prominent men in the history of the theater, famous for his plays You Can't Take It With You and The Man Who Came To Dinner. The most famous play Hart staged was My Fair Lady.

Mrs. Hart offered me her arm and escorted me to a lovely dining room where servants served us a meal of some stuff I didn't recognize in portions the size of a dime leaving me wishing I could escape to McDonalds for a Big Mac and fries.

I tried to take small mannerly bites and eat with the right forks and thought of George Gobel's line that he felt like the whole world was a tuxedo and he was a brown suit.

After lunch, Mrs. Hart took me on a tour of her penthouse.

There were autographed pictures on the walls of movie stars, U.S. Presidents, world leaders, and framed honors praising Mrs. Hart's charity work and support of the arts.

Mrs. Hart must have trusted me because she showed me her secret stairway that led to a doorway in another building.

She had the stairway constructed exclusively for Henry Kissinger so he could sneak in and out of her parties and avoid being detected.

I stayed for most of the afternoon. When I left, I received a kiss on both cheek from my famous host and an invitation to a party comin up in a few weeks. "You must come, darling," she said, "everybody will be here."

I didn't tell her the truth that I would be back i Kentucky and was already scheduled to change the c in my truck that evenin I simply thanked her for wonderful afternoon ar

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OPINION

Fourth District Report

Seeking Energy Independence

4th District Report

By Geoff Davis 4th District Congressman

As the summer driving season approaches and gas prices continue to rise, Kentucky families and businesses are once again feeling the pains of our nation's energy crisis.

Escalating energy prices are costing our families and businesses more at every turn, from filling up our gas tanks to the cost of operating our businesses.

Over the weekend, after filling up my family's van, I was alarmed when the bill came to over $65. From taking the kids to soccer practice to the daily errands that need to be run, we are all facing sticker shock at the cost of driving.

Last fall the Democratic party won control of the House by promising a new direction for Americans.

On April 24 2006, then Minority Leader Pelosi was quoted in a press release as saying, "Democrats have a commonsense plan to help bring down skyrocketing gas prices...". On that day, the national average for gas according to the AAA Fuel Gauge Report was $2.91. One year later, after promising dramatic reform that would lower the price of gas for all Americans, the Democratic leadership is finding it hard to keep their promises.

In fact, as of April 24, 2007, the national average price of a gallon of gasoline has risen to $3.01, and it's still rising.

Energy independence has been one of my top priorities since coming to Congress. We have an obligation to explore domestic sources of energy as well as invest in the production of alternative fuels. I have been working on a bi-partisan initiative in Congress that would turn Kentucky coal into liquid fuel. While this program is in its early stages and currently being tested mainly for military usage, it holds great promise for commercial deployment in the future.

Recently, Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid was quoted by Reuters saying, "Isn't it interesting every year about this time, a refinery goes down for repairs?" But with an aging energy infrastructure and no new refinery having been built since 1976, unscheduled maintenance required to keep refineries operating should come as no surprise.

During the last Congress, we worked hard to streamline the permitting process for refineries and open our domestic energy sources up for exploration. Those measures were blocked, but I am keeping up the fight.

So far in the 110th Congress, the Democrats acted quickly in their 100 Hours Agenda to repeal a provision that provides incentives for domestic oil and gas production. That only serves to drive up prices and further complicate the situation for energy consumers. Hopefully the Senate will not approve that bill. The solution to our nation's energy crisis needs to be homegrown. This means using resources like biomass and exploring for oil and natural gas along our coast – not driving production abroad to unstable, tyrannical regimes.

Recently, there has been a lot of talk in Kentucky about price gouging. If you feel that you have been the victim of price gouging, the Department of Energy wants to know. Please report your concerns with individual service stations by visiting http://gaswatch.energy.gov/ or calling 1-800-DIAL-DOE.

As your Representative in Congress, I will continue to work towards achieving more energy independence for our country.

Steve's Report

Steve's Report

By Steve Scalf

When I was 16, I worked as a fry cook at Arthur Treacher's Fish & Chips. If you have ever done much deep frying, you know that, getting burns from the hot oil is pretty much a guarantee. When the food first hits the oil, it boils violently, spraying small amounts of hot oil onto surrounding surfaces – including arms. The whole time I worked there, it was very rare for me not to have a couple of blisters from hot oil splashing up on either arm.

Teenagers seem to have trouble standing upright. It's like they always have to be leaning on something to hold them up. I was no exception. Between orders, I would place both hands on the ledge in front of the deep fryer and lean forward, resting my weight on my arms. One time when the cashier was calling back an order, I leaned forward a little further to hear better and – SPLASH! Both hands slipped off the ledge and into the oil, submerging both arms midway up the forearms.

The cashier screamed. I looked down at the oil, boiling furiously around my arms and hands. I could feel the skin tightening suddenly and knew I was seriously hurt. I remember thinking, "Oh, Lord! Save me!" I yanked my hands out of the oil, flipped on the cold water faucet, stuck my arms into the flow and waited for the pain to hit.

And I waited... but the pain didn't come. After a few more seconds, I pulled my hands out of the water and examined them. The skin was red and had a tingling sensation, as if I were being poked by hundreds of pins and needles. But there was no pain – not a single sign of a burn or a blister.

None of us – the manager, the cashier, or I – could believe I hadn't been hurt. I wondered, "How can this be?" and instantly, as if in answer to that question, I thought of the old Bible story about the three young men who had been thrown into a burning, fiery furnace for not worshipping the golden image of the king – the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

God had miraculously saved them from the intense heat that should have killed them. Maybe for some reason, God had decided to save me from being burned, as well.

Over the years as I have retold this story, many listeners have offered logical

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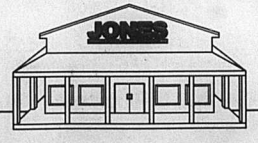

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